

"CANNED FOOD DRAINING TOOL"**TECHNICAL FIELD**

The present invention relates generally to food preparation utensils, and
5 more particularly to a tool for draining liquid packed foods.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

A plethora of kitchen utensils have been known in the art for many years. Can openers, strainers, tongs and similar instruments find broad utility in the modern
10 kitchen. While the speed and efficiency with which packaged foods may be processed in the home kitchen continues to drive technological advances, health and safety, in particular the prevention of biological contamination has increasing importance in the development of kitchen technology.

A particular area of food preparation health and safety relates to the need
15 to avoid soiling one's hands with juices and other packaging liquids for canned food products. This concern relates both to minimizing the contact between a person's hands and food they or others intend to eat, as well as reducing the opportunity for pathogens from a foodstuff to be introduced into another food in the kitchen, or to various surfaces and utensils. In addition to the hygienic advantages of avoiding soiling of the hands,
20 many consumers find sticky, smelly or acidic food packing liquids offensive. It is thus desirable to provide a simple and effective means for draining the liquids from canned foods.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

In one aspect, the present invention preferably provides a hinged canned food draining tool that includes first and second arms, and a presser equipped with a magnet for facilitating draining of liquid from canned food via a separated lid of the can.

- 5 The tool is preferably hinged at ends of the first and second arms, and includes a support portion that allows a can to be accommodated between ends of the tool arms opposite the ends at which they are hinged.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10 Figure 1 illustrates a perspective view of a canned food draining tool according to the present invention;

Figure 2 illustrates a side view of a canned food draining tool according to the present invention;

Figure 3 illustrates a partial sectioned side view similar to Figure 2;

15 Figure 4 illustrates an enlarged view of a presser element adapted for use with the tool of Figures 1-3;

Figure 5 is a top view of the presser foot of Figure 4;

Figure 6 illustrates one tool arm of a canned food draining tool according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention;

20 Figure 7 illustrates a top view of one arm with an interchangeable platform apparatus according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 8 is a top view of one arm of a canned food draining tool according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 9 is a top view of one arm of a canned food draining tool according to another preferred embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 10 illustrates a partial side view of the tool shown in Figure 9;

Figure 11 illustrates a partial view of the tool of Figure 9;

5 Figure 12 illustrates a partial view of the tool of Figure 9;

Figure 13 illustrates a perspective view of the tool of Figure 1;

Figure 14 illustrates a side view of the tool of Figure 1;

Figure 15 illustrates a top view of the tool of Figure 1;

Figure 16 illustrates a bottom view of the tool of Figure 1;

10 Figure 17 illustrates a front end view of the tool of Figure 1;

Figure 18 illustrates a rear end view of the tool of Figure 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The present invention broadly provides a hinged draining tool for draining
15 the liquid contents of a can. Referring to Figures 1-5 there are shown several views of a
draining tool 10 according to a first preferred embodiment of the present invention.
Draining tool 10 preferably includes first and second arms 12 and 14, which are top and
bottom arms, respectively. Top arm 12 may be constructed from any suitable material,
and is preferably a substantially rectangular elongate piece, attached to bottom arm 14 at
20 a hinge 11. In a preferred embodiment, hinge 11 hingeably connects top and bottom
arms 12 and 14 at proximal ends thereof. A presser 16 is preferably hingedly attached at
a distal end of top arm 12, opposite hinge 11. Bottom arm 14 preferably includes a bend
14a that facilitates the placement of a can 11 between top and bottom arms 12 and 14
such that the arms 12 and 14 may be closed together to bring presser 16 into engagement

with a lid of can 11. Thus, in a typical operation, wherein a tuna fish can having a height of about one to three inches is drained with tool 10, the relatively short, broad dimensions of the can 11 are appropriately accommodated between arms 12 and 14 such that squeezing together of arms 12 and 14 will bring presser 16 substantially straight 5 downward axially, as defined by can 11.

An arcuate portion 14c also preferably assists in properly orienting arms 12 and 14 such that a flat distal portion 14d of bottom arm 14 is substantially parallel to upper arm 12 when it is about 2 inches from the bottom of presser 16. Arcuate portion 14c preferably has an angle of greater than about 90°. A substantially straight handle 10 portion 14a of bottom arm 14 is preferably used as a gripping portion in conjunction with top arm 12 to exert a squeezing force on can 11 via presser 16. All the component parts of tool 10 are constructed from known materials and by known processes.

Referring now in particular to Figures 2 and 3, presser 16 is preferably attached to top arm 12 at a hinge 18, allowing the relative orientation of presser 16 15 relative to top arm 12 to vary, accommodating different can sizes, as well as accommodating relative displacement between presser 16 and the can itself, as occur during the squeezing of the contents of the subject can. A magnet 20 is preferably provided and mounted on presser 16 such that when presser 16 is engaged with a metallic can lid, arms 12 and 14 can be separated relative to one another, and the can lid (not 20 shown) lifted out of the can after draining of the liquid contents. Figure 3 illustrates a wire or band 13 positioned internally in top arm 12 that serves to stabilize presser 16 relative to bottom arm 14, across varying angles of attachment of hinge 18. Band 13 is preferably inserted via an open side of top arm 12. In a preferred embodiment, the open

side of arm 12 receives a portion of arcuate end 14c of bottom arm 14. A bottom surface 17 of presser 16 preferably engages the can lid.

Figure 4 illustrates a close up view of presser 16, which preferably includes a head 15 with a set of pegs 21 protruding from opposite sides thereof. Pegs 21 allow a detachable engagement of head 15 with an angled slot 22 in a retainer 24 that is hingedly engaged with top arm 12 at hinge 18. Thus, a variety of presser sizes and configurations are available and adapted to various can sizes. Figure 5 illustrates a top view of presser 16, wherein a plurality of apertures 23 are formed to facilitate draining of liquid from the can. A plurality of decorative fins 19 are preferably formed on presser 16, and impart structural rigidity as well as a pleasing appearance to the element.

Turning now to another preferred embodiment of the present invention Figure 6 illustrates a forked bottom arm 114 for use with elements similar to those illustrated with regard to top arm 12 in Figures 1-5. The Figure 6 embodiment 110 is distinct in that bottom arm 114 forks into two additional supporting arms 114a and 114b. It should be appreciated that although the embodiment of Figure 6 is shown in top view, it is contemplated that arm 114 will have a side profile similar to arm 14, described with regard to Figures 1-5, particularly in respect of the curvature thereof. The secondary arms 114a and 114b shown in Figure 6 provide additional support for a can during draining.

Referring now to Figure 7, there is shown yet another embodiment of the present invention 210, wherein interchangeable supports 230 are provided and may be detachably engaged with a bottom arm 214. Similar to the Figure 6 embodiment, the embodiment of Figure 7 is contemplated for use primarily with elements similar to those described with respect to top arm 12 of Figures 1-5. The Figure 7 embodiment includes a

bottom arm 214, with an angled slot 215 formed therein. A substantially circular supporting platform 230 is provided and includes an extension 231 with a peg 232 adapted for detachably engaging platform 230 with arm 214 via an engagement with slot 215. It should be appreciated that alternative means for detachably engaging platform 5 230 might be used without departing from the scope of the present invention.

Turning now to Figure 8, there is shown yet another embodiment of the present invention 310, wherein an angular, V-shaped, supporting platform 330 is engageable with a bottom arm 314 via an engagement of a plurality of pegs 332 on angular supporting platform 330 with substantially mating apertures 315 in bottom arm 10 315. Alternative embodiments are contemplated wherein arm 314 includes pegs and platform 330 includes apertures.

Turning now to Figure 9, there is shown yet another embodiment of the present invention 410, wherein a bottom arm 414 is equipped with a clamping mechanism that comprises first and second calipers 430a and 430b hingedly attached to 15 bottom arm 414 at hinges 440a and 440b, respectively. A hinged attachment bar 434 allows the calipers 430a and 430b to be swung around the exterior of a can to be drained, and locked there about to support the can during draining. Figure 10 illustrates a side view of the clamping elements and bottom arm 414 of Figure 9. Figures 11 and 12 illustrate close up views of locking bar 434 and one of the calipers 430b hingedly 20 attached to bottom arm 414. As illustrated in Figures 11 and 12 locking bar 434 preferably includes a plurality of pegs, corresponding to a plurality of clamping positions for caliper 430b. In a preferred embodiment, caliper 430b may be positioned at varying locations between pegs 435 to accommodate cans of varying widths. A slot 431 formed in an end of caliper 430b is preferably fitted over support arm 434, and facilitates

retention of the end of caliper 430b between pegs 435. Alternative methods of securing bar 434 might be used without departing from the scope of the present invention.

The present invention further comprises ornamental designs for a canned food draining tool. The designs are disclosed throughout the drawing Figures, but in particular are shown in Figures 10-18, which illustrate various views of tools shown in the preceding Figures. Figure 10 illustrates a partial side view of the tool shown in Figure 9. Figure 11 illustrates a partial view of the tool of Figure 9. Figure 12 illustrates a partial view of the tool of Figure 9. Figure 13 illustrates a perspective view of the tool of Figure 1. Figure 14 illustrates a side view of the tool of Figure 1. Figure 15 illustrates 10 a top view of the tool of Figure 1. Figure 16 illustrates a bottom view of the tool of Figure 1. Figure 17 illustrates a front end view of the tool of Figure 1. Figure 18 illustrates a rear end view of the tool of Figure 1.

The present description is for illustrative purposes only, and should not be construed to narrow the breadth of the present invention in any way. Thus, those skilled 15 in the art will appreciate that various modifications might be made to the presently disclosed embodiments without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention. Other aspects, features, and advantages will be apparent upon an examination of the attached drawing Figures and appended claims.